



SOUTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

An affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation

June 17, 2003

The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings
125 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

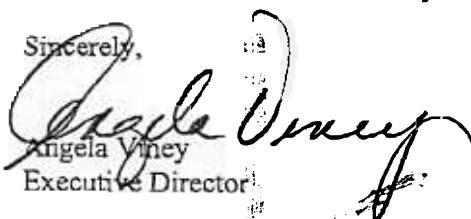
Dear Senator Hollings:

The South Carolina Wildlife Federation (SCWF) applauds you for your continued commitment to the environment and to the rare and precious habitats found both nationwide and in South Carolina. It is your continued dedication to these valuable habitats and our mission to support conservation efforts that prompts us to write to you. The purpose of this letter is to express our position on your "Congaree National Park Act of 2003."

The SCWF considers this bill, to change the designation of the Congaree National Monument to the Congaree National Park and to expand the park to include the 4,576 acres, a profitable proposal. As is evidenced in the text of the bill, there are numerous reasons to protect, preserve and expand this area. The rarity of this wilderness area boasts the last and largest example of virgin, old-growth southern hardwood forest in North America. The Congaree National Monument and adjacent private land provide valuable opportunities to experience and learn about our natural, biological, geological, and cultural history. This wilderness is home to over 900 species of plants and animals, including rare, threatened and endangered species. Since habitat size plays such an important role in maintaining healthy communities and diverse gene pools of plant and animal species, this expansion and designation as a National Park are wonderful ways to preserve such an ecologically rich area.

In addition, Mr. Harry Hampton, the founder of this Federation, was also responsible for the recognition of the Congaree Swamp as a National Monument. In keeping with the vision of our founder it is with great eagerness that we support your efforts to have this bill enacted. The South Carolina Wildlife Federation commends you for introducing the "Congaree National Park Act of 2003." Please use this letter freely in the public record.

Sincerely,


Angela Viney
Executive Director